



SPORTING ARMS AND AMMUNITION MANUFACTURERS' INSTITUTE, INC.
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to Consider the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action**
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Statement by Richard Patterson, Executive Director
Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, Inc.

Thank you Mr. President. My name is Richard Patterson and I'm the Executive Director of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI). SAAMI was created in 1926 at the request of the US federal government to create safety and reliability standards for the design, manufacture, transportation, and storage of firearms and ammunition.

We are encouraged to hear a discussion of technology and innovation at this 5th Biennial Meeting of States. It's important to keep in mind the firearm and ammunition industry has long been at the forefront of innovation. We applaud attempts at innovation, but neither support nor oppose any individual idea.

We must, however, oppose any mandate that could potentially force the adoption of an unworkable or unsafe mechanism. If the system works and offers an advantage desired by customers, there will be no need for mandates. So it goes with incorporating user recognition into a firearm—the so called "smart gun." Such technology was developed for those who must carry a firearm during encounters with criminals and other adversaries. Retention holsters and better training are already proven ways to address these problems.

This technology was not originally conceived for general firearm storage situations. Calls to mandate such use is a misapplication of the technology.

If advocates of "smart guns" promote them as a cure for crime gun access, they are deluding themselves and you. First, any such device is easily circumvented or defeated. Even if we're wrong about that—and we're not—visit maximum security prisons in the US and their museums will have displays of firearms and ammunition made by inmates right under the eyes of prison guards. Drug cartels are building submarines in the jungle. If criminals cannot disable a user recognition device or get weapons from existing sources, they can, they have, and they will simply build them.

If the purported goal of "smart guns" is to reduce the likelihood of unauthorized access by children and others, again, simple, effective, and inexpensive systems and practices already exist. The argument against these systems is they must be activated by the firearm owner to work and that such activation cannot be guaranteed. The dangerous assumption is that a passive device like user recognition will automatically be safer. But you still need to actively lock the transmitter and firearm, separately, to prevent unauthorized access and use. The assumption that passive user recognition technology is safer is exactly the reason why its mandate may increase the risk of unauthorized firearm use and accidents.

In addition to creating a false sense of safety, there are also questions about the reliability of user recognition systems—starting with the basic question: what happens when the battery fails? As with every innovation, the consumers will gladly adopt the technology when it's proven to do a better job at its intended use.

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